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LETTER DATED 4 APRIL 1999 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE
PERMANENT MISSION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED
TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to forward herewith a copy of the letter from Zivadin Jovanovic, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, addressed to Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, on 3 April 1999 concerning the humanitarian catastrophe in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia caused by the aggression of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIĆ
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex

Letter dated 3 April 1999 from the Federal Minister for Foreign
Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia addressed to the
President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

I consider justified your timely reaction to the initiative of the Red Cross of Yugoslavia to convene a meeting of national organizations of the Red Cross in order to assess the current humanitarian situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in the wake of a grave humanitarian catastrophe caused by the aggression of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

It is of utmost importance in a situation when for 10 days and nights totally unprovoked armed aggression of the United States of America and NATO against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a sovereign country, a member and founder of the United Nations, rages unchecked. Thousands of tons of NATO and United States bombs and explosives have been dropped since the beginning of the aggression, on 24 March, on cities, villages, refugee camps, cultural-historical monuments, religious shrines, schools, hospitals, bridges, factories and other civilian targets across Yugoslavia. In addition to extensive material destruction, it has resulted in a lot of innocent civilian victims. NATO and United States aggression has been coupled with the fabrication of lies and an unseen anti-Yugoslav campaign, particularly concerning the alleged "humanitarian catastrophe" with a view to misleading the international public and drawing the conclusions that suit the goals of aggressor.

For a long time now, the aggressor has been preparing a humanitarian catastrophe and has managed with the bombs and missiles to produce one. The columns of refugees from Kosovo and Metohija, the consequences of the aggression, are used in the international public to justify the crime and expansion of aggression, threatening with new victims. NATO bombs are not selective; they have equally tragically threatened and still threaten all citizens: Serbs, Montenegrins, Albanians, Muslims, Romanians, Turks, Goranians and Egyptians.

I should like to inform you that the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 31 March 1999 launched an appeal to all citizens of Kosovo and Metohija, particularly Kosmet Albanians, not to leave their homes, least of all their State, despite the NATO air strikes against civilian targets, to sympathize with others in need and to help each other and the State to defend themselves against NATO aggression. To those who have been displaced in the wake of the aggression the Government provides humanitarian assistance. The victims and plight of the civilians have been dramatically increased by daily escalation of bombing in the centres of big towns, such as Belgrade, Priština, Novi Sad, Čačak and others. So far, more than a hundred civilians have been killed and more than one thousand have been wounded. Material damage exceeds several billion United States dollars and increases by the day.

In the past few days, NATO forces have also been deliberately bombing Albanian settlements in order to generate new displacements, increase

humanitarian catastrophe and ensure public support for the expansion of their criminal aggression.

The regional water supply system was destroyed in Novi Sad, leaving 600,000 people without water.

NATO bombs have so far hit two centres for refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, hospitals, more than 100 schools and day-care centres, many cultural monuments, religious sites, telephone and other communications, infrastructure (railways, airports, bridges, roads), private homes, farms and industrial and business facilities which have no military purpose whatsoever.

In a shelter in Kuršumlija, 11 refugees lost their lives. In refugee centres in Niš and Priština, 15 persons were killed. The destruction of the storehouses of liquid chemicals and precursors for the chemical industry in Pančevo, Belgrade, Priština and other towns, poses a serious threat to the environment.

I am requesting you, in line with the mandate of the International Committee of the Red Cross, to undertake all within your powers to put an end to this aggression and prevent a humanitarian catastrophe of large proportions, not only in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, but in the region and Europe at large.

(Signed) Živadin JOVANOVIĆ
